

back to the United States Congress. And I'm proud to be here for him.

Thanks for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:28 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency. In his remarks, he referred to Luke Esser, chairman, Washington State Republican Party; Matt Hasselbeck, quarterback, and Mack Strong, fullback, Seattle Seahawks; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

Statement on the Death of Police Officer Germaine Casey

August 27, 2007

Officer Germaine Casey of the Rio Rancho Police Department died today from injuries suffered while serving as a member of my security detail in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am deeply saddened by his death and extraordinarily grateful for his protection. It is a high calling to choose to serve and protect your fellow citizens, and I will always be indebted to Officer Casey's service.

He leaves behind his wife, Lisa, and their two children. They are in my thoughts and prayers. May God comfort the Casey family and his fellow law enforcement officials.

Remarks at the American Legion National Convention in Reno, Nevada

August 28, 2007

Thank you all very much. Thank you all. Please be seated. Commander, thank you very much for the invitation to come. I'm honored to be here. I'm honored to represent Post 77 of Houston, Texas. I hope my fellow Texans behave themselves here in Reno. *[Laughter]* You won't? Okay, well—*[laughter]*.

I appreciate the fact that nearly every community in America has been enriched by the American Legion and the Women's Auxiliary. I appreciate the work that you do to remind our citizens about the blessings of America. You have the profound gratitude of the Presi-

dent and the people of this country. Thank you for your service.

I particularly appreciate the work you do with our country's young. I like the fact that you have a oratorical competition that, according to your organization, helps Americans communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. Paul suggested I might want to sign up. *[Laughter]* I appreciate the fact that through Boys and Girls Nation, you teach young people who are interested in public service about how Washington really works. *[Laughter]* I'm not going there. *[Laughter]*

We meet today at a critical time for our country. America is engaged in a great ideological struggle, fighting Islamic extremists across the globe. Today I want to talk to you and to the American people about a key aspect of the struggle: the fight for the future of the Middle East. I'm going to explain why defeating the extremists in this troubled region is essential to our Nation's security and why success in Iraq is vital to winning this larger ideological battle.

I do want to thank your commander. It's been my pleasure to work with Paul. He's been in the White House a lot, along with the executive director, John Sommer. He's represented you well, and he's served with distinction. I thank JoAnn Cronin, the national president of the American Legion Auxiliary. I appreciate Bob Spanogle, the national adjutant of the American Legion.

I want to welcome the Governor of the great State of Nevada with us today—Governor Jim Gibbons is with us. Mr. Governor, thanks for coming. The Congressman from this district is a fine Representative named Dean Heller. His wife, Lynne, sang the national anthem. Thank you both for being here today.

I'm honored to be in the presence of those who wear our Nation's uniform. I thank General Charles Campbell, commanding general, U.S. Army Forces Command, for joining us—Major General Gale Pollock, Acting Surgeon General of the U.S. Army. And for all those who wear the uniform, thank you for volunteering to defend this Nation in a time of peril. I'm proud to be your Commander in Chief.

For nearly a century, Presidents have looked to the American Legion to provide